

An Unsolved Mystery of Long Ago

Canning is not news. It happened 174 years ago. She was not a person of any great importance in the social world. In fact she was an English maid-servant. But her disappearance and reappearance and the circumstances and explanations attending both furnished food for speculation in eighteenth century England, from the highest circles to the lowest, and from John Givost's House to Land's End. This case went into the legal books as one of England's curious cases. Linked with it was the name of Henry Fielding, the author of "Tom Jones" and the father of the English novel, who sat as a magistrate in one phase of the case and afterwards wrote a pamphlet about it. Literary men were variously intrigued by its mystery. Theories of witchcraft were freely canvassed in connection with it and for several generations all England was divided in opinion as to the guilt or innocence of Elizabeth Canning. Never was maid-servant so suddenly and so widely made a celebrity and a theme for preachers and poets, for judges and counselors, for romance writers and ballad makers. Factions were formed in the case and the three criminal trials resulted from it, the mystery remained unsolved—at least, enough of it has preceded to the present day to interest that English lover of mysteries, Arthur Machen, to attempt a quite recent solution in an absorbing review of the whole case, under the title of "The Canning Wonder," published by the Alfred A. Knopf company.

Mr. Machen appears in the celebrated case as a doubter of the maid's story. In his opinion Elizabeth Canning was a "liar, perfect, total and complete," a summing up which would appear to cover all angles of possibilities. And yet, despite his Sherlockian analysis of all the evidence, and in spite of his expert presentation of its inconsistencies, he leaves the motives of her disappearance and the strange circumstances of her reappearance as much of a mystery as it was when one-half of England pronounced the maid a fraud and the other half strenuously contended for her innocence and virtue. Of one thing only is Mr. Machen thoroughly convinced—that the strange woman, for one reason or another, foisted upon the people of England a story that was made out of whole cloth—a story that brought about one sentence of death, another of transportation, and from which, to the day of her death in America, the maid herself never deviated.

The Maid Vanishes It was New Year's day, 1753, when Elizabeth Canning disappeared. She was 18 years of age, a young girl of presumably good morals and a beauty of the peasant type, ruddy and hardy, with apparently no neurotic tendencies, so far as was known. She was the daughter of Joseph and Elizabeth Canning, residing at Altembury in London, England, and she had been engaged as a maid-servant in the house of one Edward Lyon, who testified in the case that he had known the girl for sixteen years and believed her to be an innocent and honest girl. She left her master's house on the fatal New Year's day to visit her aunt who resided at Salpêtre Bank in the East Smithfield suburb. Some time between 9 and 10 o'clock of that same evening Elizabeth left her aunt's house to return home, with her uncle accompanying her part of the way. But she did not return to her master's home. She disappeared as completely as if she had walked into an air vacuum or been swallowed up by a hole in the ground. No trace of her was to be found after she left her uncle's side on the London highway. Within a week all London was agog with the mystery. Rewards were offered for information as to her whereabouts and advertisements sent broadcast thru the newspapers and posted on the highways. But she had vanished as completely and bafflingly as the Charlie Ross of later years.

Four weeks later, when all hope for her had been given up, she suddenly reappeared at her home like one resurrected from the dead—a fragile figure, clad only in a "bod-gown," emaciated apparently from starvation, bruised and sore in body from evident ill treatment and to all appearances on the verge of complete hysteria. She appeared at her mother's door, scarcely to be recognized. And then, after carp had been given her, followed the strange story which inflamed all England, and which Mr. Machen has designated as "the beginning of one of the minor enigmas of the world." Soon after she had parted from her uncle to make her way back to the town house of Edward Lyon she said that she had been waylaid by two men, who had beaten her into insensibility. Then they bound and gagged her and dragged her into a house of ill repute in Enfield Wash, kept by "Mother" Wells, an old crone with a reputation for witchery and other evils, whose husband had been hanged as a notorious malefactor. Here she claimed to have been assaulted again and robbed, this time of her clothes, by a gypsy—a widow named Mary Squires, an inmate of "Mother" Wells' institution. She then claimed that "Mother" Wells and the gypsy sought to make her "go their way" and then she refused, she was forced into an upstairs room, where she was kept a prisoner for four weeks, living on bread and water, and being subjected to inhuman treatment. During all that time she was not permitted to see anyone from the outside world. Finally, she claimed, she succeeded in making her escape by putting a bead off her window in the upstairs prison room, clambering down to an adjoining "pent house," and thence to the freedom of the highways.

"Tom Jones" Author Sits on Judge This story added to the intense excitement caused by her disappearance. Newspapers and pamphleteers exploited it. The ballad makers put it into verse. Prints of the house of Enfield Wash and its "witch" inmates were circulated by street vendors, and Maytag was agog with sympathy for the betrayed maid. Elizabeth guided the officers of the law to "Mother" Wells' brothel and the "witch" and the "gypsy" were placed under arrest, the latter charged with robbery, a capital crime in those days, and the former with being an accessory thereto. The preliminary cases were tried before Justice Fielding, who took a keen interest in the developments. Later the higher courts intervened. Mary Squires, the gypsy, was sentenced to be hanged and "Mother" Wells "to be branded with hot irons." The latter sentence was actually carried into execution, with a mad rush hovering around the victim. Then doubts began to creep into the public mind as to the truth of the story told by Elizabeth Canning and investigations began, which resulted in a charge against her for perjury. Justice Fielding seemed to have been greatly impressed with the maid's story, but in his pamphlet on the case he hints that there was a reasonable doubt in his mind. He wrote: "A child in years, but more so in understanding, Elizabeth Canning had all the marks of simplicity that I ever discovered in a human countenance, and justice men and magistrates and judges went through her evidence without hesitation, confusion, trembling, change of countenance or other apparent emotion—it was either the highest impudence or the most perfect innocence."

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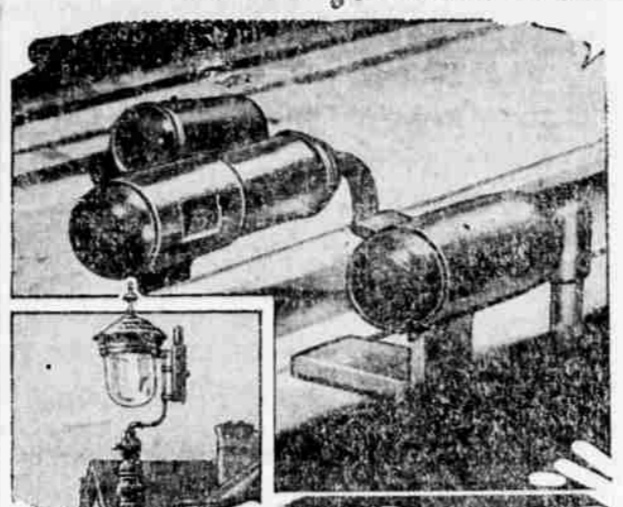
A Psychological Mystery All sorts of theories about the truth or the falsity of the maid's story were advanced by the newspapers, by the pamphleteers, by scientists and by psychologists. Witchcraft was insinuated, the theory of religious hysteria advanced, and there were many who believed that the young girl, innocent in mind, had been for the time "possessed by the devil." But at Elizabeth's trial for perjury, witnesses were found who proved beyond doubt that it was impossible for her to have been at the scene of the crime at the time designated—that she was even unfamiliar with the physical aspects of the premises. It was shown that the "Gypsy" was a hundred miles away from "Mother" Wells' house at Enfield Wash at the time she was supposed to have been there. Numerous other discrepancies were discovered in Elizabeth Canning's story. A new trial was granted the "Gypsy" and she was cleared of the charge and her neck saved. Then came on the trial of Elizabeth Canning herself for "willful perjury." A bench of seventeen magistrates, including the lord mayor of London, heard the case and the most eminent counsel were engaged on both sides. The trial lasted seven days amid the most intense excitement. She was found guilty and sentenced to transportation to America, in which country the last phase of the tragedy which terminated in romance was enacted. It must be said that the verdict of the judges did not change Elizabeth's story in any particular. She issued a statement before being deported in which she repeated her story and swore that it was true in every particular.

The remainder of this curious tale is to be found in the archives of the ancient town of Wethersfield, Connecticut. Elizabeth was sent away to Philadelphia in the ship Myrtilla, in August, 1754. On the vessel she became acquainted with the Rev. Eleazer Williams, a prominent figure in Wethersfield during the revolutionary period. Between the wife of Rev. Williams and Elizabeth Canning a strong attachment developed. The former became a firm believer in her innocence. Under the protection of Mrs. Williams, it seems that much was made of Elizabeth in her new American home, and in the end she married an "opulent Quaker," one John Treat, a grand-nephew of Governor Robert Treat. In 1773 Elizabeth Canning died, and adds the present reviewer of her case, "her secret died with her."

The Secret Unrevealed Despite the intensive analysis and the fascinating psychological and eyewitling deductions made by Mr. Machen in a book of 277 pages, pages that read like a piece of weird medieval fiction, questions remain unanswered. What was the real cause of Elizabeth Canning's disappearance? Where did she go? Who were the persons who maltreated her? For she certainly disappeared, was found counted for four weeks among the lost, and returned with every evidence about her of starvation and torment. Of only one thing Mr. Machen seems convinced—that the maid lied. But why? That is the secret that died with Mrs. John Treat of Wethersfield, Conn., and the one which will now probably never be revealed.

DAMAGE BY CODLING MOTH IS VARIED NEW YORK, Dec. 28.—(AP) The ability of a codling moth to damage apples sprayed with an arsenical poison varies in different parts of the country. The Colorado branch of this family of pests was described by Dr. Walter S. Hough of the Virginia agricultural experiment station, today, as being superior in this respect to its Virginia relatives while those that thrive in the state of Washington occupied a position in between. Reporting to the American Association of Economic Entomologists and members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science on studies made in the last two years at Winchester he said these relative degrees of damaging power appear to be hereditary.

New Radiovisor Lights Street Lamps At Dusk; Stops Trains, Burglars



Harnessed light, in the form of a radiovisor, is performing many tasks in England. The device, mounted along a railroad track as pictured above, aids in train control. Placed on a street lamp (lower left) it automatically turns the light on and off at dusk or dawn.

HARNESSED, Eng.—(AP) British science has put light to commercial use with a radiovisor. In a test covering ten months, a street lamp was ignited and shut off automatically at dusk and sunrise. The device consists of a small light sensitive apparatus, which can be used in conjunction with electrical current of any voltage to operate alarm bells, switch on lights, control trains and work signals.

For automatic train stopping a lamp is arranged on the rails so that when a signal is set at danger the lamp projects a beam of light along the track toward the oncoming train. In the event of a second train over-running a dan-

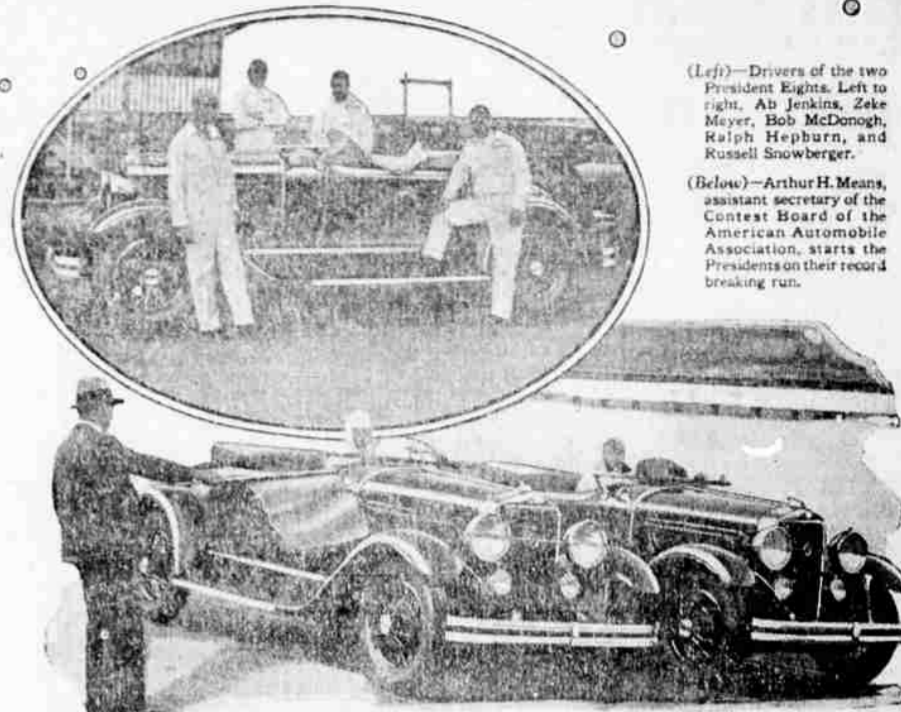
given, but a light is lit which gives the indication of the place of fire.

MAYTAG SPONSORS NEW RADIO PROGRAM

Radio audiences in all sections of the country are getting new thrills of delight due to the introduction of an entirely new type of radio broadcasting by The Maytag company, washing manufacturers of Newton, Iowa. The introductory program broadcast recently from KDKA, Pittsburgh, and KFWB, Chicago, were so successfully presented and so enthusiastically received that the new system bids fair to revolutionize present broadcasting methods. The new type of radio broadcasting is known as the So-A-Tone process, and permits the assembling of talent in the largest cities, where a transcription is made by electrical reproduction and transported to the various stations elected to broadcast the Maytag program.

The 1928 radio program for the Maytag company calls for broadcasting over 50 of the principal stations throughout the United States and in Canada. The initial broadcast was a dramatization of "The Yellow Streak," a thrilling story written exclusively by the Maytag company program by Courtney Carter Cooper, nationally known writer of circus stories. A circus band furnishes the musical background. The second program dramatized "The Kiss," a story with collegiate atmosphere and a distinctive musical setting, written by Pat Barnes, popular radio announcer. Mr. Barnes also directed the production of his story and acted a prominent part in the play.

Studebaker Establishes 12 New Records



(Left)—Drivers of the two President Eight's. Left to right, Ab Jenkins, Zabe Meyer, Bob McDonough, Ralph Hepburn, and Russell Snowberger. (Below)—Arthur H. Means, assistant secretary of the Contest Board of the American Automobile Association, starts the Presidents on their record breaking run.

Maintaining average speeds of 85.2 and 85.08 miles per hour two Studebaker President Eight Roadsters have broken all American records for fully equipped stock cars for periods from one to 24 hours and for distances from five to 2,000 miles. Studebaker now holds every official American stock car record, five world and eight international records.

Firestone TIRES

TEMPORARY LOCATION

While we are awaiting completion of our new Master Service Station, we have occupied—for your convenience—a large building at Jackson and Riverside, where you will be supplied with the famous line of Firestone Tires. Every size and every type of this extra-quality equipment is now in stock—awaiting your needs, at the lowest prices in the history of the tire industry.

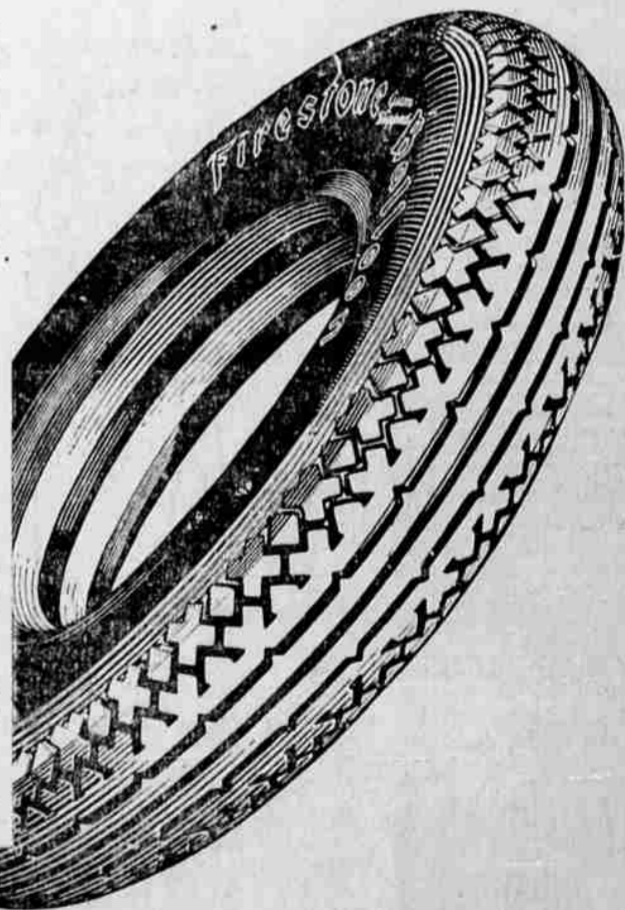
Furthermore, our complete service goes with every tire we sell and continues throughout the life of the tire. We not only apply your tires correctly, but we welcome you back for regular tire inflation and inspection. We help you get out every mile of the extra, in-built miles for which Firestone Tires are famous.

Firestone Factory Method . . . Repairing . . .

Firestone engineers developed a highly successful tire repair method and the necessary equipment as well. We use both in our repair department, which is operated by experienced repair men.

The injured section of the tire is removed and replaced, step by step, just as the tire was built originally. The vulcanizing heat is applied from the inside, directly to the repair which is cured into the tire.

We make the repaired section of the tire both look and act like the rest of the tire. We guarantee every repair we make—charges reasonable.



OLDER

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